



PRESS RELEASE

Musical traditions from all over the commonwealth—and world—come together at the Kentucky Folklife Festival



Photo: **Homer Ledford**

Master musician and instrument builder Homer Ledford performs a mandolin tune at the Kentucky Folklife Festival. (Photo courtesy of the Kentucky Folklife Program/Kentucky Historical Society.)

Music is always a favored
attraction for visitors to the Kentucky

Folklife Festival, and this year's offerings are sure to attract. The festival, the state's largest celebration of the art and culture of the commonwealth, will take place in downtown Frankfort on September 25, 26, and 27. Major themes this year will include a greater emphasis on bluegrass music, and an introduction to the many types of music that accompany various dance traditions found throughout Kentucky.

Music from multiple traditions and regions will be heard at the festival, both night and day. Visitors will have the chance to watch and listen to performers on seven stages, participate in the music through workshops and jamming sessions, and gain an understanding of various musical traditions as folklorists interview musicians on narrative stages. According to Brent Bjorkman,

folklife specialist with the Kentucky Folklife Program, "Music plays such an important role in all of our lives. When we learn about the music of our neighbors, we also learn about their values, feelings, and the many things we have in common."

The music at this year's festival will range from the lined out hymns of the Indian Bottom Association of Old Regular Baptists from Blackey in Letcher County to the Appalachian-themed but contemporary sounds of festival favorite Zoe Speaks, a duo made up of Carla Gover and Mitch Barrett. Other festival favorites returning this year include National Heritage Award winner Eddie Pennington and Bowling Green's John Edmonds of John Edmonds and the Gospel Truth.

Dance will be a major theme of this year's festival. Throughout the three-day event there will be opportunities to learn about dance from many cultural groups here in Kentucky. For instance, Latin dances like Salsa, Rumba, Cha-Cha, Merengue, and Cumbia and Appalachian dances such as Contra dance, English dance, and Square dance will be demonstrated and practiced. Visitors will be encouraged to attend workshops on Friday afternoon to learn Latino, East Indian, and Appalachian dance traditions. The Friday night dance party, *A Chance to Dance*, will provide an opportunity for everyone to try out some new steps.

Another major theme at this year's festival will be bluegrass. Performers will include Hays Brothers (Bowling Green), Arthur Hatfield and Buck Creek

(Glasgow), Homer Ledford and Cabin Creek (Winchester), the Reynolds Family Band (Elizabethtown) and the Licking River Ramblers (Paintsville). The atmosphere of a bluegrass festival will be re-created at the festival's river area, and will include "parking lot picking," complete with campers.

Bluegrass in the Bluegrass will be Saturday's theme, and visitors will be able to enjoy participatory workshops along with performances. Workshops will include a vocal workshop with Dale Ann Bradley and Coon Creek, a vocal and mandolin workshop with Don Rigsby, and a banjo-playing workshop with J.D. Crowe. The festival will conclude on Saturday night with *Bluegrass in the Bluegrass*, a tribute to bluegrass great J.D. Crowe. The lineup will include bluegrass greats Don Rigsby, Dale Ann Bradley and Coon Creek, and of course J.D. Crowe and the New South. Whether you are a lifetime fan of bluegrass or just interested in learning what all the fuss is about, you are sure to enjoy this taste of bluegrass.

The Kentucky Folklife Festival will take place on September 25th, 26th, and 27th in downtown Frankfort. Don't miss this chance to listen to, watch, participate in, and learn about many of the exciting musical traditions that Kentuckians have to share.

For more information about the Kentucky Folklife Festival, visit folklife.ky.gov or call 502-564-1792. The festival is a program of the Kentucky Historical Society and Kentucky Arts Council, agencies in the Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet and showcases the continuing efforts of the Kentucky Folklife

Program to document, conserve, and promote the folk traditions of Kentucky.

There is no general admission charge, but there are fees for some festival activities such as the boat rides. Donations are accepted and appreciated.

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